

St. Joseph's Encouraging Enrichment for Patients with Life-Limiting Illnesses

The Comprehensive Cancer Center at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center is offering a unique palliative medicine program to treat patients in a holistic manner while they undergo treatment for a chronic illness.

St. Joseph's Life Enrichment Program is designed to manage the symptoms a patient may experience while living with a life-limiting condition. The program offers patients assistance with:

- Pain management
- Psychological and social health
- End-of-life issues
- Beliefs such as spirituality
- Psychosocial help to a patient's family as they work through the transition of caring for or losing a loved one

"A good percentage of people who have a life-limiting illness do not have their symptoms managed correctly and many are admitted to the hospital on a regular basis," says Jose Urdaneta, M.D., medical director of Palliative Care and Pain Management at St. Joseph's. "The Life Enrichment Program at St. Joseph's helps make our patients comfortable in a dignified and compassionate manner."

Similar palliative care programs are becoming more prevalent in hospitals throughout the country. Rather than just treating a patient's illness, these programs treat the patient holistically and provide healing for the mind, body and spirit. St. Joseph's Life Enrichment team is comprised of a palliative care medical director, two nurses, an internist and a psychiatrist to help patients manage all of their symptoms.

"We want to ensure that our patients are comfortable by controlling their pain and giving them the opportunity to explore their values, spiritual needs and beliefs while encouraging hope," says Mary Schneider, director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center.